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GENERAL REVIEW

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This is a condensed report on the administration of the Bahrain Government during the last eleven years, though in some subjects the report goes further back than 1926. The report is based upon the annual reports on financial and government departments which are made every year. It is an administration report dealing mainly with the activities of the Bahrain Government and it does not describe in detail the various political and commercial changes which have taken place and which have affected Bahrain during the period under review, such as the transfer of the Naval Base from Henjam to Bahrain, the inclusion of Bahrain as a port of call on the Empire air route, and the long negotiations which finally resulted in the development of the Bahrain oil field by the Bahrain Petroleum Company Limited, who have now succeeded in making Bahrain the twelfth largest oil-producing country in the world. This last decade has been an important period in the history of Bahrain: it has been a time of change and transition. During the last ten or eleven years the changes and reforms which were made by the Ruler, His Highness Shaikh Sir Hamad, when he took over control from his father have become firmly established, and the administration of the country has been developed through its people on sufficiently Western lines to keep apace with the needs of the local inhabitants and the ever-increasing important foreign population. In other Gulf States, Bahrain is considered very progressive; the wish to be progressive comes from the people themselves, it is not forced upon them by the Government.

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During the period under review the State has suffered violent financial fluctuations; first comfortable prosperity based on the pearl trade, then severe financial depression resulting in drastic curtailment of all activity and expansion, then recovery and a sudden tremendous increase in revenue which, in my opinion, would have been more advantageous if it had come gradually. This sudden change from poverty to affluence creates problems and conditions which are almost more difficult to deal with than those resulting from the need for economy. A period of great financial prosperity, provided that oil does not run dry, appears to be starting now for Bahrain, and I think it is a suitable time to make some record of the developments which the Bahrain Government carried out in the past years and which were financed from revenue produced from other sources than oil royalties. While fully appreciating the fact that if oil had not been found the financial position of Bahrain would be deplorable, it should be remembered that most of the existing improvements in Bahrain, such as electric power, sea roads, causeways, schools, and municipalities, came into being before the oil era.

C. DALRYMPLE BELGRAVE.

December, 1937

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problem. The protestations of the Persian Government and its view of the concession as null and void, have broadened the Anglo-Persian controversy to include the United States, and as a side issue have created an Irano-American dispute. Considering the location and the nature of the countries involved, this has dangerous potentialities, especially in the present state of international relations.

With the above in mind, the present book was written to provide the reader with the minimum of facts essential to an understanding of the problems in this part of the world.

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A. Faroughy.

New York, August 1950.